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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (12/02): EU Recognition of East Jerusalem as Capital Welcomed as Jerusalemite Home is Occupied by Settlers

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Main Stories:  
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Independent daily Al-Quds leads with news that European Union is considering acknowledging East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state. The article reports the EU will recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state its next Foreign Ministers meeting scheduled for December 7.

Dailies and Maan report Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's statement that the settlement moratorium in the West Bank is in fact only a "one-time, temporary" standstill. According to the articles, Netanyahu excluded 2500 units which are under construction and 500 other units that were approved recently. Netanyahu is quoted in independent daily Al-Ayyam expressing hope that the Palestinians accept a resumption of peace negotiations.

Dailies and independent news outlet Maan report that a group of Israeli settlers occupied the sealed house of Rifka Al-Kurd in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah at 10am on Tuesday, after obtaining an order from the Israeli Conciliatory Court that gave the settlers permission to assume possession of the house. Hatem Abdul Qader, Fatah official for Jerusalem Affairs, said that his office submitted a petition to the Israeli Central Court appealing the Conciliatory court order and that the appeal will be discussed by noon today.

News of the prisoner exchange deal receives front page coverage in the dailies. Palestinian Authority official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida quotes a Hamas official as saying that the talks have reached an "irreversible stage." Al-Quds notes that the disagreement between Hamas and Israel is over 50 names including

Ahmad Sa'dat, Marwan Barghouti, senior Hamas leaders and 3 female prisoners.

Al-Quds and Maan report that Prime Minister Fayyad was ranked among the top 100 Global Thinkers for this year by the American Foreign Policy magazine.

Citing AFP, Al-Ayyam runs front page coverage of President Obama's expected announcement to send 30,000 soldiers to Afghanistan in next 6 months. Thus far, there has been no additional media coverage or local reaction to the speech.

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BLOCK QUOTES:  
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1) Al-Quds runs an editorial entitled "Will the World's Silence Towards our Cause be Transformed into Positive Actions?" in which it says that the EU initiative deserves support to empower and enable it in the face of Israeli pressures, which so far have obstructed American efforts. According to the writer, taking serious actions to end Israeli occupation is the only way to achieve stability and security in the Middle East and throughout the world.

2) Hani Habib writing in Al-Ayyam under the title "Sweden Draws the Identity of the Palestinian State!!" opines that while the US has reversed its commitment regarding a full cessation of settlement as a precondition for resuming peace negotiations, Europe has progressed. In his opinion although the European position will not

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replace a clear US position, it will certainly help.

3) Adel Abdel Rahman writing in Al-Hayat Al-Jadida under the title "The European Decision" states that despite the importance of European attempt to recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state, the decision will not change anything on the ground because it doesn't oblige Israel to adhere to international laws. He argues that more concrete efforts must be exerted.

MARCHESE